

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

For the Year ended December 31st, 1948.

To the Sanitary Authority of the Borough of Welshpool

Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit to you my Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary conditions of the Borough of Welshpool for the year ending December 31st, 1948.

The report is drawn up in accordance with the instructions contained in the Welsh Board of Health circulars Nos. 3/49 and 170/47.

1. VITAL STATISTICS.

Area of the Borough: 20,427 Acres.

Population: 5,817, a decrease of 39 on the figure given for 1947.

BIRTHS

Live Births

| | | | | Male | Female | Total |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----|------|--------|-------|
| Legitimate | .. | ... | ... | 66 | 50 | 116 |
| Illegitimate | ... | ... | ... | 4 | 7 | 11 |
| | | | | 70 | 57 | 127 |

Still Births

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----|---|---|---|
| Legitimate | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Illegitimate | ... | ... | ... | — | — | — |
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Birth Rates

Live Birth Rate (per 1,000 estimated population: 21.8
(compared with 17.9 for England and Wales).

Still Birth Rate (per 1,000 estimated population): 0.52
(compared with 0.42 for England and Wales).

DEATHS

| | | | | | | |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|------|--------|-------|
| | | | | Male | Female | Total |
| All Causes | ... | ... | ... | 38 | 30 | 68 |

Death Rate (per 1,000 estimated civilian population):
11.7
(compared with 10.8 for England and Wales).

Infant Mortality**Deaths of Infants under One Year of Age**

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----|------|--------|-------|
| | | | | Male | Female | Total |
| Legitimate | ... | ... | ... | 2 | — | 2 |
| Illegitimate | ... | ... | ... | — | — | — |

Death Rate (per 1,000 Live Births): 15.7

(Compared with 34 for England and Wales)

Deaths from Diarrhoea under 2 years of age: Nil.

Causes of Death

| | Male | Female | Total |
|---|------|--------|-------|
| Tuberculosis of the Respiratory System | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Other Forms of Tuberculosis ... | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Cancer of the Uterus | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Cancer of the Stomach | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Cancer of the Breast | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Cancer of all other sites ... | 4 | 6 | 10 |
| Diabetes | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Intracranial Vascular Lesions ... | 6 | 2 | 8 |
| Heart Disease | 12 | 7 | 19 |
| Other Diseases of the Circulatory System | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Bronchitis | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Pneumonia | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Ulcer of the Stomach and Duodenum | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Other Diseases of the Digestive System | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Nephritis | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Premature Births | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Congenital Malformations ... | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Road Traffic Accidents | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Other Violent Causes | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| All Other Causes | 6 | 2 | 8 |

COMPARATIVE STATISTICS

| | | | 1946 | 1947 | 1948 |
|--------------------------|-----|-----|------|-------|------|
| Population | ... | ... | 5714 | 5856 | 5817 |
| Live Birth Rate | ... | ... | 21.9 | 20.73 | 21.8 |
| Still Birth Rate | ... | ... | 0.53 | 0.34 | 0.52 |
| Death Rate | ... | ... | 12.8 | 12.3 | 11.7 |
| Infantile Mortality Rate | ... | ... | 32.0 | 24.5 | 15.7 |

2. Infectious Diseases

During the year, the following diseases were notified:

| | | | | |
|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| Pneumonia | ... | ... | ... | 11 cases |
| Measles | ... | ... | ... | 44 cases |
| Whooping Cough | ... | ... | ... | 33 cases |
| Acute Poliomyelitis | ... | ... | ... | 1 case |
| Typhoid Fever | ... | ... | ... | 3 cases |
| | | | | — |
| Total cases | ... | ... | ... | 92 |
| | | | | — |

Note. — The cases of Typhoid Fever were sporadic cases occurring in one house in the Buttington area. Despite exhaustive enquiries and investigations the source of the infection was not discovered. It was established that there was no connection between these cases and the epidemic which occurred at the same time at the Orthopaedic Hospital at Gobowen.

Diphtheria.—It is significant that no case of this disease has been notified in the Borough since 1945. This fact is indicative of the efficiency of the Immunisation against Diphtheria service.

3. TUBERCULOSIS

During the year the following cases were notified:

| | Male | Female | Total |
|--------------------------------------|------|--------|-------|
| Pulmonary | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Non-Pulmonary | 0 | 1 | 1 |

One case of Pulmonary and the case of Non-Pulmonary Tuberculosis died. Prior to July 5th, 1948, the work of the diagnosis and treatment of Pulmonary and Non-Pulmonary Tuberculosis was carried out by the Welsh National Memorial Association. Since the advent of the National Health Service Act, on that date, the work is now the responsibility of the Mid-Wales Hospital Management Committee of the Welsh Regional Hospitals Board.

The County Tuberculosis Physician, Dr. M. I. Jackson, and the Assistant Physician, Dr. H. Pick, visit the Welshpool Hospital Clinic, on the 1st and 3rd Mondays in each month. There, clinical and X-ray examinations are carried out on a large number of cases. The Physician also visits patients at their homes by arrangement with their medical attendants, and maintains **supervision** of all tubercular patients in the area throughout the course of their illness. Patients from this area are treated at the Tuberculosis Hospital, Machynlleth, the North Wales Sanatorium, Denbigh, and the South Wales Sanatorium, Talgarth.

I take this opportunity of thanking the Tuberculosis Physician and his Assistant for the excellent work they continue to do in this area.

4. HEALTH SERVICES

The year 1948 may well be accounted a momentous one from the Public Health point of view, for, with the coming into force of the National Health Service Act on July 5th, the Local Health Authority (the Montgomery County Council) is made responsible for the provision of Health Services, consisting of the care of mothers and young children, midwives' service, health visitors, home nursing, the prevention of illness, care and after-care in the home, domestic help, ambulance service, and immunisation against Smallpox and Diphtheria.

In the Borough of Welshpool and the surrounding districts, an efficient Ambulance Service is provided by the St. John Ambulance Division. whose members (drivers and attendants) give their services voluntarily. I do not think that this is fully realised in the district, and I would personally like to see more interest taken in the work of the St. John Ambulance Brigade by the young men and women of the Borough.

Immunisation against Diphtheria and Vaccination against Smallpox is a service also provided by General Medical Practitioners under the National Health Service.

The Mental Health Service is administered partly by the Mid-Wales Hospital Management Committee of the Welsh Regional Hospital Board, and partly by the Local Health Authority.

A Psychiatric Clinic is held each Monday afternoon, at the County Infirmary, Newtown. The visiting Psychiatrist, Dr. B. J. Hand, deals with all cases referred to him there by Medical Practitioners.

5. Venereal Diseases

These diseases are not notifiable, but all cases brought to my notice are referred for treatment to the Treatment Centre at Shrewsbury.

6. WATER

Town Supply

(a) Rainfall figures for the year:--

| | | ins. | | | ins. |
|----------------|-----|------|-----------|-----|-------|
| January | ... | 7.67 | July | ... | 1.68 |
| February | ... | 2.47 | August | ... | 4.01 |
| March | ... | 1.18 | September | ... | 2.35 |
| April | ... | 1.89 | October | ... | 2.26 |
| May | ... | 2.08 | November | ... | 2.28 |
| June | ... | 3.59 | December | ... | 2.95 |
| Total for year | | ... | | | 34.41 |

This compares with 37.73 inches in 1946, and 27.09 in 1947.

(b) Minimum supply to reservoirs was 84.750 gallons per day recorded on 26th July. The lower pool was 2ft. 3in. below top water level on the 10th August, the other pools remained full throughout the year. Draw on storage was similar to 1946 (i.e. approximately 1½ millions). There was an ample supply of water throughout the year. Minimum waste line was 1,500 gallons per hour. Average consumption 100,000 gallons per day.

(c) 138 samples of water were submitted for bacteriological analysis. Of these the 14 that were taken from public taps were all satisfactory. 11 were for private supplies required for milk production. 36 from local springs were being tested as possible supplementary supplies to new housing sites. The remaining 77 taken from the Black Pools were tests to ascertain the effect of storage on the quality of the water in the reservoirs. One interesting result was that raw water taken from the stream supplying the Reservoirs was found to be fit for drinking after 5 days' storage in an open container. Excellent results were obtained in the chain of Reservoirs—the tests showed that whereas the raw water supplying the pools contained 1,800 faecal coli per 100 m.l. this number under favourable conditions was re-

duced in the lower pool to 2, 1, 7, 5, 0, 8, 2 per 100 m.l. During periods of heavy rainfall, this improvement in quality was not maintained but there is sufficient evidence to shew that if surplus requirements were bypassed at the Reservoirs the quality of water in the pools could be improved almost to the standard of good-class drinking water merely by storage, and this in spite of the pollution that takes place on the gathering grounds as a result of farming operations.

One chemical analysis was taken of water from the Gelli Spring and this was found to be satisfactory.

(d) During the year 41 new houses at Maesowen were connected to the Town Supply and a new 4-in. link was laid from Gungrog Road to Dolerw, which has greatly improved the supply on the older Housing Estates at Gungrog Road and Erw Wen.

The connections to the town supply are as follows:—
1,397 houses; 183 shops, etc.; 3 farms; 2 small holdings.
Total: 1,585.

7. Guilsfield and Groes

There was an ample supply throughout the year. The draw on the 150,000 gallon storage was only 10,000 gallons. Minimum reading of spring yield was 1,440 gallons per day, taken on 13th August. No consumption tests were carried out and it was not necessary to hold night waste water inspection. During the year the mains were extended and services provided for the twenty-two new houses; in addition, laid-on services were provided for six existing private houses and the Presbyterian Church in Groes, bringing the total number of connections into house and other premises up to 38. The number of standpipes are: Groes, 4, and Guilsfield, 7.

8. County Water Scheme

The formation of a Bulk Board to cover the water requirements of all Local Authorities in the County, by tapping the Rivers Clywedog, Gam and Twrch has been agreed to in principle and steps are now being taken to prepare a detailed and costed scheme for consideration by a Joint Committee on which all authorities, including the County Council, have representatives.

9. Milk

(a) The total number of retail producers on the Register at 31st December, 1948, was 18, there being no additions during the year. Wholesale producers numbered 91 as against 79 for the previous year.

(b) 13 applications for registration were received in 1948.

(c) Four new T.T. Licences were issued during the year, bringing the total to 23. The number of Accredited Producers registered is 10.

(d) All sampling is carried out by representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture.

10. Food

(a) 549 certificates in respect of food surrendered as unfit for consumption were issued during 1948, as against 289 in 1947. These were in respect of the following: 2,478 small tins of food, 505lbs. meat, fish 82lbs., sugar 60lbs., 325lbs. dates, 66lbs. cheese. 14lbs. butter, 18½lbs. bacon, 71½lbs. margarine.

Notice is given to the great increase in the number of tins surrendered. In 1946 and 1947 the figures were 401 and 997 respectively whereas for the year under review the number was 2,478.

(b) One slaughter house was re-registered under the Ministry of Food scheme for home-killed pigs.

11. Drainage and Sewers

(a) Sewage Disposal Schemes for villages of Trewern and Guilsfield were prepared and submitted to the Welsh Board of Health and it is expected that work on these will be started shortly. Several smaller schemes for Pool Quay, Buttington, Brithdir and Castle Caereinion also received consideration. When completed these works will affect a much needed improvement in the sanitary condition of all villages in the Borough.

(b) No trouble was experienced in the town drainage system, although instances of the Sewers being surcharged with surface water were noted.

(c) Extensions of the sewer to new houses were carried out as follows:—

Maesowen 41; Trewern 20; Guilsfield 22.

12. Nuisances

22 Informal and one Statutory Notices were served in respect of nuisances following complaints received and inspections made. These figures compare with six and three respectively for 1947.

13. Disinfections

Seven houses were disinfected during 1948 as against four in 1947.

14. Verminous Premises

Twelve dwelling houses were disinfected as against two last year.

15. Infestation Order

(a) The arrangements for dealing with Rodent destruction were altered during the year; formerly one operator was employed, his time being shared equally between the County Council on the one part and the Forden R.D.C., Montgomery Borough and Welshpool Borough on the other. During the year an additional operator was engaged by the County Council and this new arrangement is working satisfactorily.

(b) Inspections numbering approximately 500 have been made in all quarters of the town. Leaflets offering free treatment have been delivered to all dwelling houses in the built-up area, with disappointing results—only five complaints were received.

During the year 1,235 baits were laid and 322 ozs. of poison baits were taken, which is considered to have accounted for 805 rats.

The sewers were treated in June and July, 1948. There are 84 manholes in the town, of which 63 were baited. The first treatment resulted in 20 takes and the second in 14. In all 71 ozs. of poison bait were eaten (177 rats).

16. Registration of Ice Cream Retailers

Two retailers were registered.

17. House Refuse

The refuse collection from the villages in the Borough and houses en route is proving satisfactory, and is much appreciated by those concerned.

Salvage. Salvage collections have been started from the villages and good results have been obtained. During the last year 28 tons of waste paper was collected in the Borough which compares favourably with 15 tons in 1946 and 5 tons in 1947.

18. Rivers and Streams

No action necessary.

19. Closet Accommodation

No change.

20. Shops and Offices

The provisions of the Shops Act have been complied with. No court proceedings were necessary.

21. Smoke Abatement

No action necessary.

22. Schools

All schools are periodically inspected. Canteens are now in use at the three schools in the town and also at the following village schools — Belan, Guilsfield. Maesmawr and Buttington.

23. Housing

(a) Site preparation works were completed for 41 new houses at Maesowen and for 22 at Guilsfield. At Trewern similar works for 20 houses was started.

(b) **New Houses.** During the year 39 houses were completed and occupied bringing the total number of post war houses built in the Borough up to end of 1948 to 132.

(c) Preliminary survey work for the building of houses for agricultural workers and others at Pool Quay. Castle Caereinion, Buttington and Brithdir was put in hand and if proceeded with these schemes will cause a fairly extensive development of the water supply of the Borough which would benefit not only the villages mentioned but a large number of farms and cottages.

(d) Similar work was started on the Borfa Green Site on the northern fringe of the built-up area of the town. Upwards of 70 houses can be accommodated on this site but as it lies above the gravitational line of the existing town supply its development will necessitate a pumped water supply or a link-up with Trinity Well.

(e) **Overcrowding.**—26 houses were surveyed and 12 were found to be overcrowded.

I take this opportunity of thanking the Town Clerk, the Borough Sanitary Inspector (who kindly supplied the notes on Water Supply, Rainfall, Housing, etc.) and the Water Inspector for their assistance and advice during the year.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant.

D. R. B. MATHIAS.



